DOCTOR WHO

SERIAL G

"THE SENSORITES"

BY PETER R NEWMAN

An Adventure in Space & Time

THEY'RE DANGEROUS AND CUNNING THESE SENSORITES –
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING VERY STRANGE. THEY CAN CONTROL..
..THEY CAN FRIGHTEN.... BUT THEY DON'T ATTEMPT TO KILL?

DOCTOR WHO — AN ADVENTURE IN SPACE AND TIME

Susan turned to look at her alien host, sitting upright at his table, looking for all the world like a diner in a cafe. How old was that ageless face? she wondered. Seemingly so ancient, but with eyes alive with keen intelligence. Yet there was a child-like naivety about the Sensorite nation - a naivety that could bring about their doom. The First Elder caught Susan's curious gaze, and was about to speak when Susan enquired: "Why do you trust your people?"

"Why do you want to make me doubt them?" came the quizzical reply.

"Trust can't be taken for granted," Susan argued. "It must be earned. I trust you, only because I know you."

"But, Susan," murmured the Sensorite ruler, spreading his hands wide, "our whole life is based on trust."

"Yes, and that might be your downfall. Look, you don't trust the ground you walk on until you know it's firm, do you?" As the First Elder nodded in assent Susan went on. "So why trust your people blindly?"

The old Sensorite paused a moment before replying. "When I listen to you - you who are so young among your own kind - I realise that we Sensorites have a lot to learn from the people of Earth."

Susan smiled and walked over to the balcony, overlooking the graceful curves of the Sensorite city. Beyond lay an Elysian expanse of rolling fields and hills, but Susan's eyes were fixed upon a much further horizon. There was a wistful sadness in her voice as she spoke.

"Grandfather and I don't come from Earth," she sighed, raising her eyes to the crystal clear heavens above the Sense-Sphere. "It's ages since we've seen our planet. It's quite like Earth...but at night, the sky is a burnt orange, and the leaves on the trees are bright silver."

('A Desperate Venture' - 1st. August 1964)

STORY SEVEN — 'THE SENSORITES'

As the TARDIS doors swing softly open, and the four travellers begin to step outside, an awesome and chilling sight meets their eyes. They have landed aboard a huge space vessel, and further investigation uncovers the apparently dead bodies of two humanoid pilots - a man and a woman. As the companions begin to examine the bodies, a figure appears outside the TARDIS, and begins to apply a heat device to the ship's lock mechanism.

Sensing some sinister danger, the Doctor decides that they should return to the TARDIS, but a sudden, unexpected movement from the 'bodies' halts them in their tracks. To their astonishment, the two pilots begin to awaken. They announce themselves as Captain Maitland and Carol Richmond, two of the crew of the Earth ship orbitting the Sense-Sphere planet. It transpires, though, that the planet's native life-form, the telepathic Sensorites, are exerting tremendous power over the humans, plunging them into catatonic trances for indeterminate periods.

The discovery of the TARDIS with its lock burnt out brings home the realisation that someone - or something - is aboard the ship with them; but no sooner has this fact been accepted than the whole ship begins to lurch out of control, plunging down towards the surface of the Sense-Sphere itself! However, this is merely a Sensorite illusion. Some little time afterwards, following Barbara's and Susan's tense encounter with John (the ship's mineralogist, unhinged by the Sensorites' power), the Sensorites board the vessel. They request a meeting of the two factions via a telepathic communication with Susan.

The Sensorite envoys tell the travellers of past events and how, due to the treachery of a previous Earth expedition team, all human visitors are now held prisoner for life on the Sense-Sphere, a planet rich in the precious mineral Molybdenum. However, there is a glimmer of hope for the travellers as they learn of a mysterious 'plague' striking down the Sensorites. Leaving Barbara and Maitland on board the ship the Doctor, Ian, Carol and Susan journey down to the planet, a bargain having been struck; the Doctor's help with the plague in return for the pilfered TARDIS lock.

Soon after landing on the Sense-Sphere, the travellers are given a gracious and flattering welcome by the First Elder; but their arrival has not gone unnoticed...or unopposed! The City Administrator is unhappy that more Earthlings are being brought to the planet, and begins to make plans.

Ian falls prey to the 'sickness' soon after drinking some of the city's undistilled water and, after some investigation, the Doctor discovers that the city's water comes from different sources, explaining why the disease, or poisoning, strikes only at random. With the Doctor's knowledge a cure is quickly found, and he begins his investigations at the aqueduct to which he has traced the source of the trouble. Susan and a recovered Ian follow him, and find him struck down soon after his discovery of cultivated beds of Deadly Nightshade.

Murder and intrigue continue in the City, and plans are made by the Administrator, taking the place of the Second Elder, to kill the travellers by sabotaging their plans for an expedition into the tunnels by giving them useless weapons. In the tunnels, the Doctor and Ian stumble upon the cause of the trouble...A small group of demented Earth survivors, poisoning the water as revenge, whilst simultaneously excavating Molybdenum.

Back up on the surface, the evil Administrator is arrested and the situation between the humans and the Sensorites resolved. The TARDIS lock having been restored to the travellers, they watch as Maitland's ship speeds on its way back to Earth.

STORY REVIEW — "...PLAYING THIS GAME OF NERVES"

by John Peel

The fact that, in 1964, 'Doctor Who' was still aimed essentially at the younger audience is brought home very strongly with 'The Sensorites'. The style of production adopted for this serial, in relation to all the other adventures during the first season, makes it markedly different. In fact, for the first time since the series had begun, I felt that 'Doctor Who' was actually being "written down", or indeed, toned down to work on the same wavelength as that of the hypothetical child. We are given obvious clues; explanations are offered several times over - clearly to ensure that the audience is still with the plot. Inevitably, this slows the pace of the tale down. Having said this, 'The Sensorites' is still a brilliant and well-constructed story, with threads that dovetail extremely well; and in the Sensorites themselves, Peter Newman has given us one of the best alien races to appear in the show.

The most noticeable aspect of the serial is the total difference between the first two episodes and the remaining four. The adventure begins as the TARDIS materialises aboard an Earth spaceship, which is in an eternal orbit around the Sense-Sphere planet. The ship looks rather like the space-going equivalent of an old Dakota aircraft, complete with heavy, rivetted bulkheads and plain, functional cabins. Here the atmosphere is one of pure 'Gothic' horror, extremely well-handled and superbly directed. Later, the action switches from the spaceship to the planet, where the dark mystery is replaced by serenity, albeit with underlying tension. However, the four travellers are not alone, accompanied now by the three crewmembers of the spaceship, first thought to be dead, but in reality under the mind-control of the Sensorites. As Maitland explains: "...hostile, these Sensorites, but in the strangest possible way." They will not allow the Earth people to leave orbit, but neither will they kill them! The Doctor rationalises the situation when he says, "Fear has loosened his mind, and it gives the Sensorites chance to control it."

Oddly enough, however, the Sensorites turn out to be less villainous than they first appear. The Doctor quickly realises that they are creatures of the light, and that they are helpless in darkness. In fact, as Susan remarks, "They're timid little people". They wish no-one harm, and the "game of nerves" they play with the humans is a result of this. They don't wish to harm them, but they can't let them go; for the Sense-Sphere is rich with the mineral called Molybdenum, and the humans need this precious metal for their spaceship construction. The First Elder of the Sensorites explains their attack to the Doctor, Ian and Susan. "He (John) thought of a fleet of spaceships to come here and mine the metal, and transport it back to his own planet. We saw the pictures he formed in his mind...and we saw that it was the end of our way of life. We had no alternative."

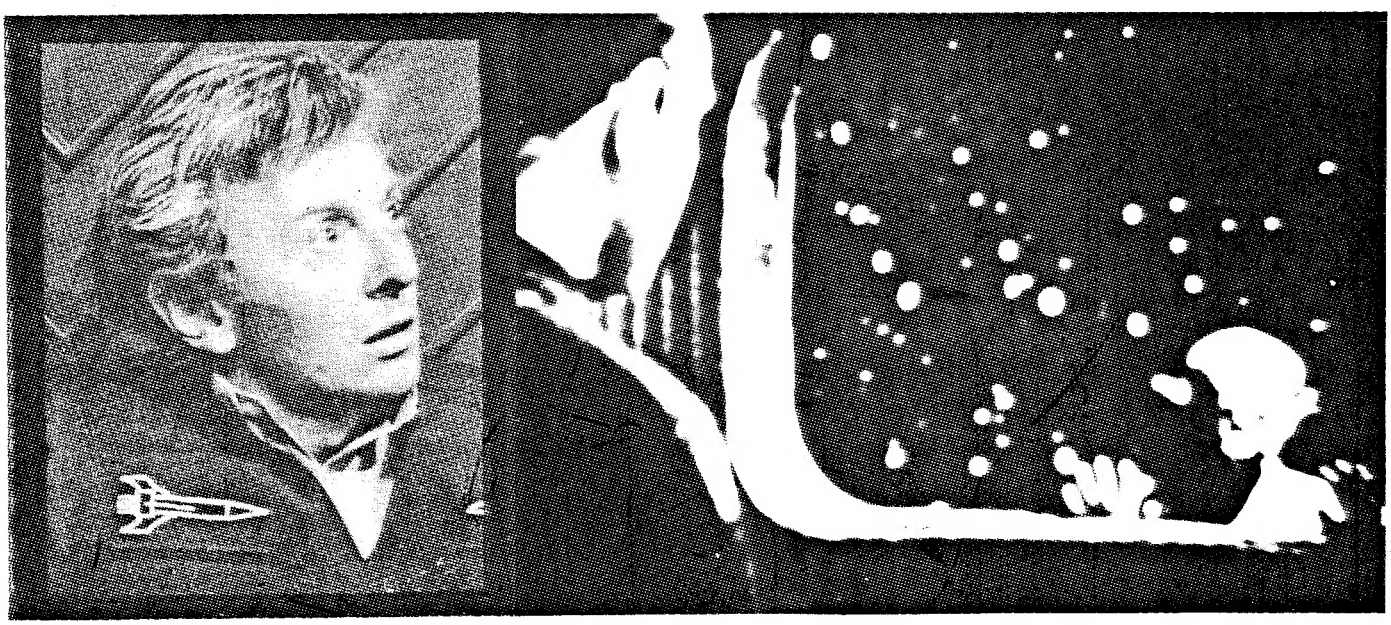
Then two plots become intertwined. First, the City Administrator, distrusting the humans, attempts to kill them all, or at least to discredit them in the eyes of the ruling First Elder. Secondly, the Doctor investigates a strange disease which is killing the Sensorites. This turns out to be deliberate poisoning by the crew of an earlier Terran spaceship who everyone thought had perished during its take-off, when the ship exploded. Instead they are totally insane and are carrying out a "war" with the Sensorites for the Molybdenum. In appearance, the three deranged crewmen are shabbily-dressed, with a stubbly growth of beard and long, matted hair. However, like all other characters in the story, even these men have strong motives for their actions, and aren't characterised as villains in the classical

sense. The human Commander is played superbly by John Bailey, whose dry delivery of dialogue makes his performance very convincing and a joy, however brief, to watch. One just couldn't help but feel sorry for him. Having issued strict orders to his two men, he turns to the Doctor and Ian. "Have to keep up morale, you know. But they're all good men. Very fine. Morale's high here."

The City Administrator is another matter entirely. Starting with suspicion of the humans, he stoops to murder and intrigue. He dislikes humans intensely. "Their pleasant smiles conceal sharp teeth. Their soft words hide deadly threats." He has an able, but twisted mind, and from starting his war with the humans to save his people, he ends by simply seeking power for himself. Ironically, the fate he suffers - the only genuinely evil person in a race of good - is the same as that of Autloc ('The Aztecs'), who was the only good man amongst a race of evil ones. Both go into the wilderness, away from their fellows. Perhaps this is a comment on the fate of the different in society? However, the Administrator is a marvellous villain. In retrospect, it is difficult to reconcile oneself with the fact that this villain, beneath the superb make-up, and in what turned out to be a very strong performance, was portrayed by none other than Peter Glaze of 'Crackerjack' fame.

The set designs throughout the production are stunning. The Sensorite city, with its curves, light and beauty, is in stark contrast to Maitland's ship, which is dark, gloomy and cluttered; an effective antithesis, suggesting the quite different moods of the varying parts of the story. Norman Kay's menacing music is in fine form again, although at times a little out of place in the city. Above all, however, praise must go to those actors who portray the Sensorites, chosen largely because of their short heights. The physical sameness of the Sensorites means that each actor has to convey a whole variety of emotions, not through facial expression (the limitations imposed by set-featured masks), but through the careful expression of voice. Each Sensorite action, by the use of their whole bodies, is therefore packed with tremendous meaning.

Another point about this story is that, for the first time, we learn more of the home of the Doctor and Susan, even though it remains un-named. "When will we get back, Grandfather?" asks Susan. "I don't know, child," he answers. "This old ship of mine seems to be an aimless thing." If Carole Ann Ford (as Susan) seems to have a great deal more than usual to do in this serial, then it cannot be ignored that all four lead players are very well catered for - a most positive aspect of Newman's script. It is a great shame that he has not since written for the show, as he had a fine grasp of the essential ingredients in any good plot. It seems reasonable to say that 'The Sensorites' could have been achieved in four, rather than six, episodes, but the excitement was sustained for the whole distance.



Susan Foreman Written by JEREMY BENTHAM

Susan Foreman was first identified as a fifteen year-old school-girl who lived alone with her Grandfather. The fact was, her Grandfather owned a Time and Space travelling machine, and both he and Susan were not of the planet Earth, nor were they from the year 1963.

As we then discovered, Susan was a very peculiar amalgam of "teenage normality and uncanny intelligence". Her depth of knowledge in both scientific and historical subjects was truly impressive, but this was off-set by adolescent attitudes common to young women of her supposed age. She adored pop music, she employed contemporary slang and resented overt authority when presented to her by members of "the older generation". But although a few questions still remain relatively unanswered about her, there is little doubt that Susan was not human. More than once she made reference to the homeworld from which she and her Grandfather had become exiled; and both expressed their fervent hopes that they would one day return there.

However, one had only to look as far as Susan's character and personality to see that she possessed extraordinary abilities, quite alien to the contemporary Earthling. During an early scene of the very first episode, we witnessed Susan as she performed a weird dance with hand movements to the music of 'John Smith and the Common Men' on her transistor radio. On a much deeper level, she was endowed with a mind of great proportion, which retained a vast wealth of technical knowledge. In addition, she could lay claim to abilities in extra-sensory perception - a talent she exhibited freely in 'The Sensorites', wherein her mind became sensitised by the psychic energy surrounding the Sense-Sphere. With a little thoughtful application, Susan was able to speak freely with the Sensorites on a mental plane, without the aid of telepathic amplifiers such as those Barbara had to wear to make her thoughts intelligible.

In many respects, 'The Sensorites' was the turning point in Susan's development as an adult woman. The Susan Foreman who left the Sense-Sphere in the TARDIS at the end of the story was subtly different to the one who had stepped onto the metal bulkhead of Maitland's ship at the beginning. As Barbara correctly surmised, Susan was all too rapidly growing up.

The signs had always been there. No secret had been made of the fact that Susan was maturing, mentally as well as physically. During 'The Aztecs', she had flatly refused to obey a command that she should marry by arrangement, angrily retorting that she would marry whomsoever she chose. Perhaps the most striking evidence of her changing ways was displayed in 'The Sensorites'. At last, there took place the great rift between the Doctor and Susan, whereby the latter rebelled against the old man for continuing to treat her like "a silly little child".

The Doctor was a mental giant and an imperious tyrant to those around him, but yet this was mellowed in the form of an extreme affection for Susan - an affection which she more than returned. As the Doctor pointed out before they went their separate ways, while he had been looking after her, Susan in turn had been looking after him. He doted on her as his little girl, without realising that she was fast becoming a woman - and a woman who wanted a permanent and secure future; not an aimless wandering through the corridors of Infinity.

The Sensorites Written by JOHN PEEL

"The Elders think and rule, the Warriors fight, the Sensorites work and play." The Sensorites were split into castes, and all things on the Sense-Sphere worked to logical patterns - even family life. The Sensorites lived in Family Units; the females raised the children and were kept separate from the males, an uncomplicated and sometimes idyllic lifestyle which this highly cultural race had created for themselves. In fact, of all the aliens ever to appear in 'Doctor Who', perhaps the diminutive Sensorites were the most engaging. They were marvellously likeable creatures; a race of gentle, incompetent philosophers - rather like children in their ways - but willing to learn. They were physically frail, timid by nature, but capable of fighting when they felt it necessary to fight.

As a pacifist race they could not comprehend the debasement of moral values, of strict discipline, of trust and peace.

By the same token, their pacifism was their one great weakness. They were so good-natured that when the City Administrator's hatred of the humans turned to thoughts of great evil, none of the other Sensorites could truly understand why. His paranoia was the antithesis of the Sensorite code of conduct, and therefore beyond their comprehension - until almost too late. For this reason it is difficult to understand why the Administrator became so evil in such a short time. All that is clear is that his mind was obviously unhinged, amply demonstrated in his passionate remarks: "More weakness! These creatures are defeating us with smiles and gentle words." The Administrator had completely lost faith in his own people.

At the other end of the scale, though, the First Elder was wise and kind, if lacking in initiative. This explains perhaps why the Doctor was so easily able to brow-beat the Sensorites. Where they lacked initiative, he possessed it in abundance. Even Barbara became annoyed by their defeatist ways, forcing them to take action, much as it went against their nature.

Appropriately enough, this 'action' involved the use of the highly-developed Sensorite telepathy, which allowed Barbara to trace her friends who were lost in the aqueduct. This method of telepathic communication was performed by small mental amplification discs, pressed to the forehead. These enabled the thought-wave channels on the Sense-Sphere to be utilised for sending directional messages. Without the discs the Sensorites could hear the messages but could not respond to them. Communication was of great importance to these creatures, who took a good deal of pleasure in conversing with the travellers for the new insights this gave them, although they would often encounter strange alien customs.

In one such encounter, complaining about the humans' use of "absurd names", the Administrator stormed: "None of them have any badges of authority or signs of position - how are we to distinguish them?" For the Sensorites, identity was not a problem. They may have looked physically identical to each other, but their communication by telepathy meant they could dispense with something as simple as visual identification - except for the sashes of office the more senior Sensorites wore. However, one can sympathise with them. The First Elder neatly rationalised the situation between the humans and Sensorites when he said, "To them, we may appear ugly. What we must create between us is trust".

Technical Observations

'The Sensorites' featured an extended prologue. This included a brief resume of the four travellers' adventures together since the TARDIS left the junkyard in Totter's Lane.

The TARDIS interior set was built adjacent to the Earth spaceship's control room set. This allowed the viewer to follow the companions through the doors of the TARDIS, without a camera cut, as they first set foot aboard the orbitting vessel.

The exterior of the spaceship was featured on just one occasion - a model shot of the vessel as it drifted away through space towards the end of the final episode.

The division of episodes meant that the spaceship interiors were used only for the first three episodes, the remainder of the serial being set in the Sensorite city. The city was composed of small, sparsely-furnished, well-lit sets (with the exception of the cluttered laboratory), and backcloths for the Sense-Sphere landscape.

In appearance, the Sensorites were all rather short in height (approximately five feet five inches), with bulbous heads and facial hair. They had perfectly round feet, a fact which caused Susan much amusement. The costumes they wore (in reality orange coloured) were one-piece and covered them from the neck down. Strapped to their sides were telepathic amplifiers, small discs which they would touch to their foreheads when communicating with each other over long distances. They also possessed a multi-purpose weapon, shaped rather like a small tennis racket. Sensorites had two great fears; darkness and loud noises. Their eyes, beneath long lashes, were completely black, their pupils being dilated to their extent to take in as much light as possible. They spoke in soft whispers to take the harshness out of their voices.

The ruler, the First Elder, was denoted by two sashes across his chest. The Second Elder, who advised the First Elder, wore a single sash. Each city had an Administrator, whose job it was to look after the smooth running of the city, and who was distinguishable by the band about his neck. Warriors were led by a Captain, and were denoted by three bands about each forearm. The scientists had spiral patterns on their chests.

Barbara (Jacqueline Hill) did not appear during the fourth and fifth episodes. Captain Maitland (Lorne Cossette) made no further appearance in the serial after part three.

John (whose surname was never revealed) accompanied the small group to the Sense-Sphere. There he underwent a scientific process to reverse the effects of the Sensorites' psychic energy upon his mind. This involved being strapped to a chair, with a series of electrodes fixed to his head. The process was a success and John, whose grey hair was now restored to its true dark colour, was completely recovered.

DOCTOR WHO - AN ADVENTURE IN SPACE AND TIME

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PRODUCTION CREDITS

SERIAL "G" SIX EPISODES BLACK AND WHITE

"STRANGERS IN SPACE"	-	20th. June	1964
"THE UNWILLING WARRIORS"	-	27th. June	1964
"HIDDEN DANGER"	-	11th. July	1964
"A RACE AGAINST DEATH"	-	18th. July	1964
"KIDNAP"	-	25th. July	1964
"A DESPERATE VENTURE"	-	1st. August	1964

CAST

DOCTOR WHO.....WILLIAM HARTNELL
IAN CHESTERTON.....WILLIAM RUSSELL
BARBARA WRIGHT.....JACQUELINE HILL
SUSAN FOREMAN.....CAROLE ANN FORD

JOHN.....STEPHEN DARTNELL
CAPTAIN MAITLAND.....LORNE COSSETTE
CAROL RICHMOND.....ILONA RODGERS
FIRST SENSORITE.....KEN TYLLSEN
SECOND SENSORITE.....JOE GREIG
THIRD SENSORITE.....PETER GLAZE
FOURTH SENSORITE.....ARTHUR NEWALL
FIRST ELDER.....ERIC FRANCIS
SECOND ELDER.....BARTLETT MULLINS
COMMANDER.....JOHN BAILEY
FIRST HUMAN.....MARTYN HUNTLEY
SECOND HUMAN.....GILES PHIBBS
OTHER SENSORITES.....ANTHONY ROGERS
GERRY MARTIN

CREW

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ASSISTANT FLOOR MANAGER...VALERIE McCRIMMON
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MAKE-UP SUPERVISOR.....JILL SUMMERS
INCIDENTAL MUSIC.....NORMAN KAY
STORY EDITOR.....DAVID WHITAKER
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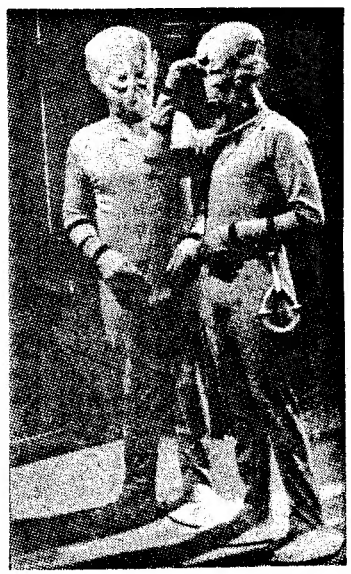
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER.....MERVYN PINFIELD
PRODUCER.....VERITY LAMBERT
DIRECTOR (1, 2, 3, 4*).....MERVYN PINFIELD
DIRECTOR (5, 6*).....FRANK COX



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Those who worked only on particular episodes are indicated by an asterisk.

Compiled by
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